

## *The President's Daily Brief*

26 May 1969

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

The tenuous agreement between Lebanese President Hilu and Rashid Karami has come unstuck, and the chances have dimmed that Karami will form a new cabinet. Karami now says he will not accept Hilu's proposed restrictions on the fedayeen unless the fedayeen, acting through Egyptian intermediaries, also agree to accept them. Hilu plans to sound out other Muslim politicians for the premiership if he cannot get Karami to change his mind again in the next week or so.

All this is happening amid signs that the period of relative inactivity among the fedayeen in southern Lebanon is coming to an end. The terrorists have begun firing on Lebanese Air Force planes and have hit one of them.

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Czechoslovak central committee plenum scheduled for 29 May is shaping up as an important encounter in the struggle between conservatives and moderates for control of the party. National party first secretary Husak--in office for little more than a month--is fighting to gain control of the party and to point it along an internally moderate and pro-Soviet course. He is being challenged by conservatives, led by Czech first secretary Strougal, who are now on the offensive.

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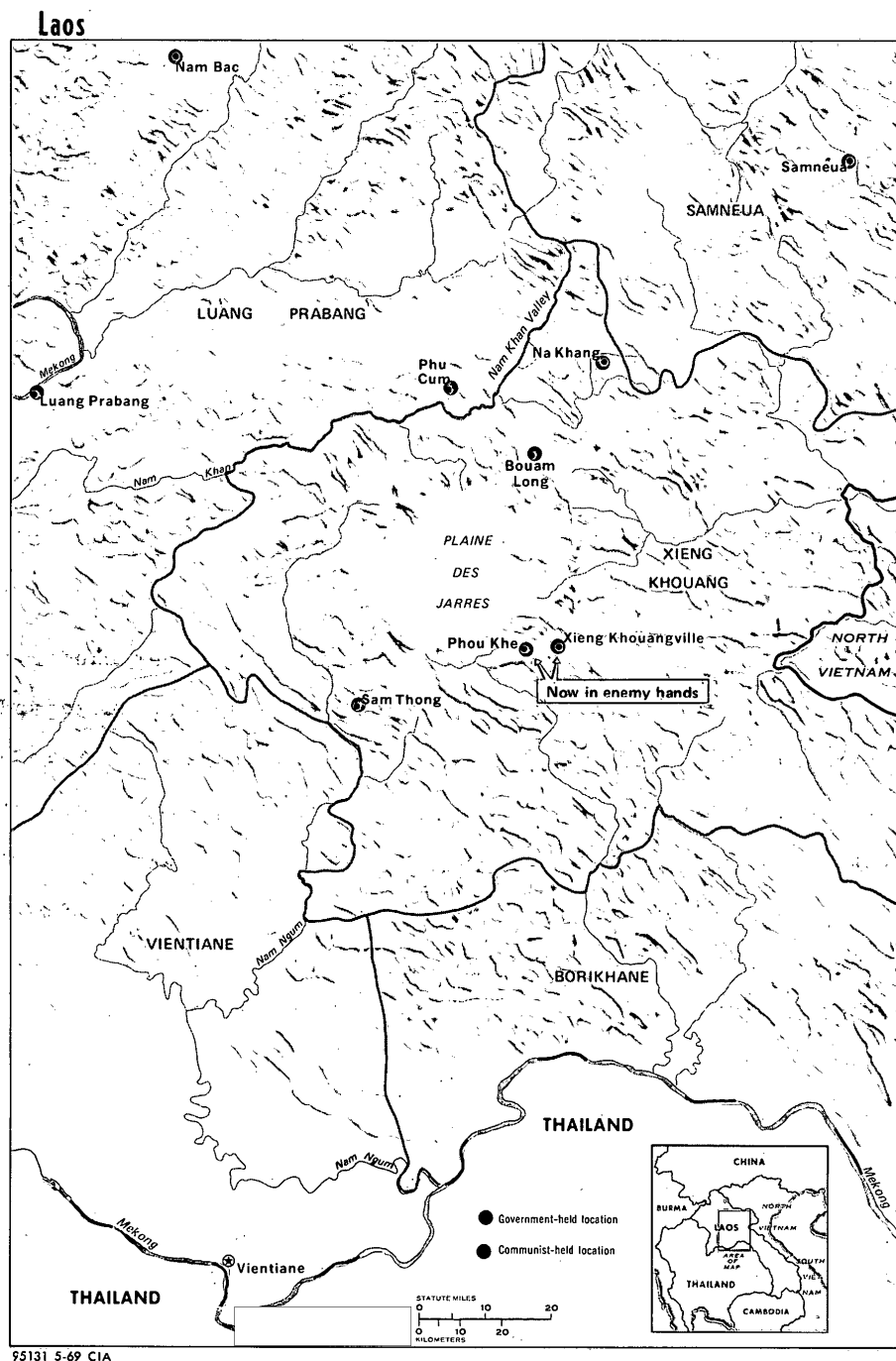
The Soviets, by denying Husak public support, are not making it any easier for him. Moscow, for example, is said to have rejected Husak's bid for a visit before the plenum. His one-day visit to Poland on Saturday, his earlier consultations with Hungarian leader Janos Kadar, and a planned meeting with East German leader Walter Ulbricht on 26 May probably are attempts to drum up support.

*VIETNAM*

Thieu successfully launched his National Social Democratic Front yesterday before an audience of some 2,000 members of the six political parties making up the new front. In his address to them, Thieu emphasized that the front is not designed to monopolize patriotism or to seek dictatorial power. The door is open, Thieu said, for others to join or to form opposition groupings, and he called for those who wished to participate in the anti-Communist struggle but who differed with the policies of the front to organize themselves.

There is still a long way to go before the front becomes a functioning national political organization. Thieu may even doubt that it will ever amount to much more than a vehicle to give various political factions some sense of participation in the government process. A hint of what Thieu probably sees as the basic organizations for the struggle against the Communists came in his reference to "other important anti-Communist elements" such as the army, the civil service and the government administration. He noted that the new front "will cooperate" with these forces in the fight against the Communists.

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EUROPE

There is nothing of significance to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SUDAN

Many of those involved in yesterday's coup in Khartoum are pro-Egyptian or are connected with the Sudanese Communist Party. Colonel Numayri, the leader of the ten-man Revolutionary Council, is a suspected Communist. Eleven of the 21 members of the new cabinet are suspected or known members of the Communist Party, and five of these 11 are members of the party central committee. The remaining new cabinet members have leftist links [REDACTED]

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We still cannot tell how secure the new ruling group's hold is. The army as a whole has long been conservative; about a third of its members belong to the Ansar religious sect which forms the backbone of the conservative Umma Party.

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LAOS

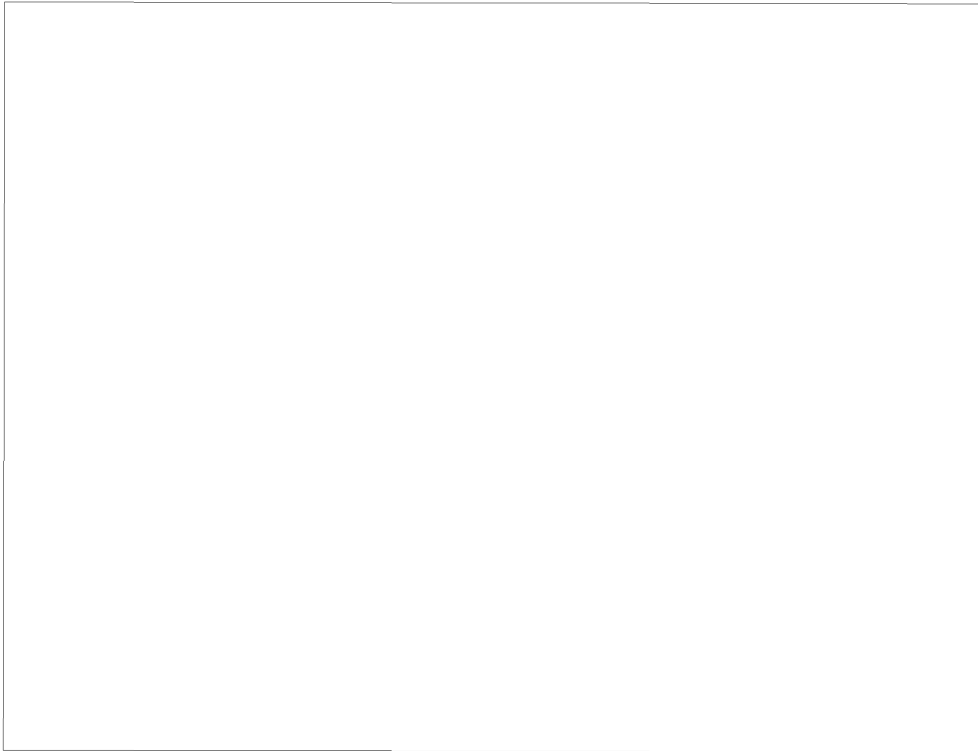
The government's counteroffensive south of the Plaine des Jarres has been dealt further setbacks. The remaining positions at Phou Khe have fallen to North Vietnamese attacks. Government troops also have withdrawn from Xieng Khouangville in the face of numerically superior enemy forces.

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Meo leader Vang Pao, with Souvanna's backing, nevertheless plans to continue his efforts to keep strong pressure on the Communists. Government guerrillas yesterday were regrouping near Phou Khe for a counterattack.

SOVIET UNION - PAKISTAN

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